

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Miller: United States Senate, House of Representatives, Must Act Now on Oil Prices



With the winter heating season about to hit and with oil and gas prices at all-time highs, it is essential that Connecticut's U. S. Senators and Members of Congress act now to ensure consumers are not victimized by speculators at the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) and the oil and natural gas industries, state

Representative Lawrence G. Miller, R-122nd District, said today.

NYMEX is the world's largest clearinghouse for the trading of energy commodities and plays a central role in setting energy prices in the United States. That means prices for natural gas, electricity, propane, crude oil, gasoline and heating oil are first set through the daily trading of energy futures contracts at NYMEX, Representative Miller said.

"While the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina and the rising worldwide demand for petroleum and natural gas have contributed significantly to the sharp increases in energy prices we have been experiencing for the past few months, the energy futures traders at NYMEX also played a major role in pushing up prices at the pump this summer and will bear a major share of the responsibility for making heating oil almost unaffordable for millions of Americans this winter," Representative Miller said.

"As far as factors in setting energy prices are concerned, the old law of supply and demand seems to have been replaced by speculation and greed - and consumers are paying dearly for petroleum and natural gas products as a result," said Representative Miller, who last month sent a letter to U. S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman urging him to press for a Senate investigation to determine why gasoline and oil prices hit record-high levels over the summer months - and the role oil futures traders at the exchange are playing in pushing petroleum prices through the roof.

"Our federal elected officials in the U. S. Senate and the House of Representatives must refocus their attention from the confirmation battle over Judge John Roberts' nomination to the Supreme Court and the question of who deserves more blame for the slow response to Hurricane Katrina to the one issue that directly affects almost everyone in Connecticut and elsewhere in the country - out of control oil and natural gas prices," Representative Miller said.

“Every American citizen should be contacting their congressmen and senators and demanding that action be taken now to bring down energy prices – before the winter heating season sets in and retirees on fixed incomes and low-to moderate-income families are forced to spend more to heat their homes and fill their gasoline tanks and less on food and prescription drugs,” Representative Miller said.

The independent Connecticut Petroleum Association is predicting that consumers will be paying as much as \$2.62 per gallon for heating oil during the winter months, which could translate to an overall increase of \$300 or more per household for the heating season, Representative Miller said.